

# Statement by international organizations on judicial independence and respect for fundamental rights in Ecuador

September 22, 2025

The international human rights and civil society organizations that subscribe to this statement express our ***deep concern about the climate of harassment and pressure currently facing the Constitutional Court of Ecuador***, in the context of the government's announcement of a referendum for a Constituent Assembly, which is moving forward amid questions about respect for constitutional procedure and judicial independence.

On September 19, while the Court was hearing constitutional challenges to the presidential proposal, it was reported that the National Police had evacuated the Court's premises due to an alleged bomb threat. According to reports, this incident adds to a context of external pressures that include disruptions to the normal functioning of the Court, public stigmatization campaigns against its members, and the reduction of previously granted security measures.

Both the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers have spoken out on several occasions in recent months about the risks facing the Constitutional Court. Both bodies have reminded the State of its duty to ensure the free exercise of judicial functions and to guarantee the safety and integrity of those who perform this essential role, reflecting growing international concern about these events.

The validity of rights in a democratic system requires a legal order in which there is effective judicial control over the actions of the executive, legislative, and other public authorities. It also requires that public authorities respect constitutional channels and act through the mechanisms provided for in the Constitution. The independence of the Constitutional Court and its role as the supreme guarantor of constitutional order are essential pillars of democracy and the rule of law. We therefore urge the State to ***fully respect the Constitution and the rule of law***, guaranteeing the independence of public authorities and the safety of judges and justice operators.

At the same time, and in view of the peaceful demonstrations called by the indigenous movement and various sectors of Ecuadorian civil society, we call on the State to ***respect and guarantee the rights to peaceful protest, freedom of expression, and freedom of association***, protecting the integrity and safety of human rights defenders, journalists, and protesters, and refraining from any measures that could lead to repression, excessive use of force, criminalization, or undue restrictions on public debate.

Today, at the start of the United Nations General Assembly, we call on the heads of state and senior officials present in New York to speak out on the situation in Ecuador. We also urge the international community—including diplomatic missions, multilateral organizations, and human rights protection mechanisms—to closely monitor the situation, speak out against threats to judicial independence, and support Ecuadorian civil society in defending its fundamental rights.

We warn that the weakening of the rule of law in Ecuador would have serious repercussions for the region and for international cooperation. The international democratic community cannot remain indifferent to a setback of this magnitude.

Signatory organizations:

- Amazon Watch (AW)
- Alliance for Land, Indigenous, and Environmental Defenders (ALLIED)
- Amazon Frontlines (AF)
- Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
- Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
- World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
- Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights (RFK)
- Stand.earth